

AFRICA

P.T. - Lunoco.

Mon. Mar. 29, 1943
Maxwell Field, Alabama.

Good Evening Everybody! -

Sir Bernard Montgomery and his British Eighth Army have done it again. They have burst into the Mareth line on a twenty five mile front, ^{They have} occupied Mareth itself and put Rommel on the run. Yes, the desert fox turned tail and fled, leaving six thousand prisoners in the hands of the British, six thousand prisoners and a huge amount of booty. ^{Rommel} He has escaped, for the time being, into the Gabes bottleneck. ^{That is} how a correspondent describes it. As he runs, British and American planes are drenching the Nazi field Marshal and his once invincible Afrika Corps with bombs, shells and machine gun fire. The score is really something to gloat about. ^{It is} the biggest victory of the Tunisian war, and all in all the most thrilling event of several months. The triumphant British-English, Scots, Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans and all have not only broken a wide hole through Rommel's defenses they are now occupying three fortress towns, Toujane, Mareth and Mata Mata; also all the other strong points of the Mareth line. There are strong indications that ~~the great field marshal~~ Rommel is preparing to retreat, not just to Gabes but beyond that seaport up the coast. Front line dispatches report that he has had the big air

49

field. ^{at} Gabes plowed up. That means he is abandoning Gabes ^{and} intends to pass it by, and make a stand at some yet undivulged strong positions further north. There is hope he may be cut off. He is menaced by strong American forces advancing in three sectors along the backbone of eastern Tunisia. Yes, the Americans are pushing on from El Quettar Maknassy and Fondouk. Mareth was taken by a brilliant piece of strategy. Montgomery sent one British column swinging around the desert into the Mareth line. That forced the capitulation of Mareth.

~~That same column is now attacking heavily in the El Hamma sector.~~

Rommel has left a rear guard to hold a sixteen mile bottleneck while his main body is retreating. ^{TR} The allies are closing in too in northern Tunisia where Nazi general Von Arnim is holding out. The British

First army is pushing ahead there. It has driven the enemy out of a number of his positions, ^{and taken a} ~~and gained several miles above Djebel Abiod.~~

~~That is a strong axis point fifty miles to the southwest of Bizerte.~~

~~With the British first army is a Brigade of Moroccan ^S Goums, fierce~~

~~fighting native Algerian militia. Just how they got to be called~~

~~Goums I cannot tell you tonight. Sufficient for the day that those~~

~~Goums have been most useful and on the right side. Military observers~~

50

Military experts

are now pointing out that the collapse of the Mareth line is remarkably like the fall of the Maginet line, after which it was modelled. Rommel was able to beat off several strong frontal assaults but the line was just no good after it was outflanked. ~~It seems that this clinches a military lesson which will be remembered for all time.~~

~~The allied communique definitely attributes Sir Bernard Montgomery's victory to the attack on El Hamma by that strong flanking column.~~

~~This news is cheerful and exciting, but we must not cheer too loudly.~~

Here is a warning from military quarters. ^{That} Rommel is not yet crushed.

If the Americans can cut through to the coast before he passes, then his goose is cooked. That would throw the whole burden of the final defense of Tunisia on to the axis armies commanded by general Von Arnim at Tunis and Bizerte. But the Americans have ^{nt} ~~not~~ yet reached the coast. In fact, they have a lot of hard fighting to do before they get there. And if they do ^{nt} ~~not~~, Rommel can keep going until he gets to Sousse, which is ~~an~~ an exceedingly strong defensible seaport only seventy miles to the south of Tunis. One satisfactory fact reported is that the allied defensive is not a strong, well coordinated operation. ^T The enemy is on the defensive all the way from Gabes to Northern Tunisia.

RUMOR FOLLOW AFRICA

Here is an item to be taken with a large handful of salt.

there is a rumor, a rumor set afloat by the Nazis themselves, that the British have occupied Gabes. There is no confirmation whatsoever from allied headquarters in north Africa or from any other official source on our side of the fight. The rumor originated in a broadcast controlled by the Nazis a program called "voice of the Arab world". It is broadcast in Arabic. That message was recorded in London but it sounds far too premature to be taken seriously.

Russia-1
~~RUSSIA~~

52
17
Reports from Russia tonight deal principally with the Leningrad front. The red army has renewed the attacks which several months ago drove the Germans away and raised the siege of the great city that is peter the great built on the ~~neba~~^V. Soviet field marshal Voroshilov is throwing tanks, planes and infantry into an assault that is becoming more and more intense every hour. The Germans admit heavy attacks^S by the Russian both in the Lake Ilmen sector and the lake Ladoga sectors. The Finns admit that action has been stepped up on the Karelian Insthm in the north of Leningrad. Spring thaws and rains have slowed up the battles further south. Russians and Nazis alike acknowledge that the fighting is becoming slacker both on the Smolensk front and the Donets river. The entire smolemsnk area is becoming a sea of mud, says the Moscow dispatch. ~~it is~~ hampering transport of every kind. Probably there will be no significant hostilities there for several weeks, maybe not before the end of April. The ~~Russians~~ claim that the Germans have failed to break through on the Donets.

General Macarthur's headquarters reports that the tempo of Japanese air attacks is being speeded up in New Guinea. Their strategy is to stop the Americans and Australians from consolidating and improving the bases they have established covering the approaches to Port Moresby. The Japs of course are still determined to capture Moresby. In the past week, they have thrown more planes into action than ever before in the southwestern Pacific. On Monday they sent as many as eighty of them to attack ^{a locality} ~~the Oro Bay of New Guinea~~, twenty miles east from ~~the Buna sector~~. ^{TP} On the other hand, a story from Washington has it that the high command of the United Nations is preparing to fulfill President Roosevelt's promise for ~~great~~ decisive action against the Japs. This follows an important conference held by all the Pacific military chiefs with the head war planners of the United States. Lt. Gen. Emmons, commander at Hawaii, lieutenant general Kenny, commander of allied air forces in the southwest Pacific, Lt. General Millard F. Harmon, commander of United States Army forces in the South Pacific have been meeting with the chiefs of staff in Washington. These meetings were arranged, says the official announcement, to acquaint the commanders in the Pacific with the policies and plans ^C decided upon at the Casablanca conference. It is

realled that Pres. Roosevelt said last February; -"There are
many roads which lead to Tokye and we shall neglect none of them."

LT from
Maxwell Field,
Alabama.

Mar. 29,
1943.

pre-flight
training
center.

CADET VETERANS

Although most of the tens of thousands of young men who report to Maxwell Field come direct from colleges, prep schools and high schools, quite a number of them are young fellows who have already spent considerable time in the army. To illustrate this I have invited seven cadets to sit on the platform with me; here alongside General Ralph Royce, their chief.

One is Henry Holt who served with the Marines for four years, in China. In fact, his father-in-law is now a prisoner with the Japs. Henry is learning to fly, and he says he has some unfinished business "out East."

Another is a chap who has served in the Army in the Far North - in Greenland of all places. Fourteen months in Greenland. And his name is Ed Hiltner - Edward C., to be exact.

Then comes one I may not be able to pronounce. A lad who already has served in the Army Intelligence Department, served in the Army and who also took Commando training in England:- Henry Krawiec, now a

Cadet here at Maxwell.

Over here sits a boy who flew the Atlantic in a bomber and was in fact in the first B-24 that went into combat in this war -- George Ingle.

Let's see, now the fifth members of the group. How's this for a record for a cadet? He has been an aerial gunner on five bombing missions over Nazi territory in Europe. And now he has come to Maxwell Field, to become an Air Force pilot -- John Kennedy.

Which brings us to another cadet who already has seen far more of the war than most of the ten million odd who are entering our armed forces will ever see. For here is a youngster, who as a bombardier on a plane patrolling the Caribbean, sank a German U-boat. The lanky cadet over there, by the name of George Wallace.

And then the seventh and last of this group. Here's a boy who has been in this war, fighting the Japs out in Burma and China, since before Pearl Harbor.

Yes, he's a Flying Tiger. That is Henry Olson was a crew chief with the A.V.G., and before he came home to go through the Air Force training to become a pilot, he was decorated by the Generalissimo. Chiang Kai-shek pinned that ribbon on Henry for exceptional bravery.

General
Royce.

Mar. 29,
1943

L.T. - I saw one example of what you say, General, in the way you handle the boys who get the measles or anything else that's going around. I happen to know ~~about~~ about one chap who was visiting with his family, at a hotel in Montgomery. He wasn't feeling up to par. Someone here at Maxwell Field learned of this, and in less than ten minutes an ambulance was rushed into the town, for the cadet. And the treatment he has had since then - well, Colonel Boling, as commandant of Maxwell, I congratulate you - the treatment he has gotten is better than he could have had at home.

GEN. ROYCE: Aside from that, Mr. Thomas, I can assure you, and I could go on all afternoon talking about it, the training of American flyers for this war is so vastly superior to what it was in the last war, that there just isn't any comparison.

questions about it that I would like to ask you. For instance, General Royce, how can you turn out first class flying men, thousands of them, and do it in such a hurry?

GEN. ROYCE: You said thousands, Mr. Thomas, but you should have said tens of thousands. In fact, tens upon tens of thousands. I can't tell you the exact number. But it's great enough to stagger the imagination.

L.T.: Well, at that rate can you give them the careful training you gave them in peace time when we were only turning out a few flyers a year?

GEN. ROYCE: Yes, we can. And here are a few of the reasons: Our equipment is better, and our methods have been vastly improved. Moreover, in spite of the fact that we are turning out flyers by the tens upon tens of thousands, we are not doing it in a mass production fashion. Each young man is studied and treated as though he were the only flyer being trained.

headquarters is here at Maxwell. General Ralph Royce. Remember him? He was one of our leading airmen, in France, in the First World War. And in this War he personally led the longest bombing raids of the war, that is, prior to the bombing of Japan. It was in the South Pacific, from Australia to the Dutch East Indies and on up to take a crack at the Japs who had already moved into the Philippines.

L.T.- General Royce, recently, in Washington, General Arnold, Chief of the Air Force, told me that before long we will have more than two million men in the Air Force. It will be larger than any other part of our armed establishment, either Army or Navy. You go back to the First World War, and so do I. You and I remember when there was no Air Force. And we don't consider ourselves old men either. And now here it is outstripping all other military services, in point of numbers. To me it seems incredible - that all this should have happened in such a short space of time. And there are a lot of

MAXWELL - GEN. ROYCE

I'm broadcasting from the Deep South tonight; from Alabama. Maxwell Field, near Montgomery, to be exact. This is the largest pre-flight training center in America. And that probably means the largest in the world. The barracks for the Air Force Adets, the athletic fields, the instruction centers, the vast dining halls, and places of recreation actually make Maxwell Field one of the principal cities of the State of Alabama. There are several auditoriums here at this cadet training center, but none of them even one-tenth large enough to accommodate all of the fine looking young fellows, your sons and mine, who are here being trained by the U.S. Army Air Force.

More than a thousand cadets are sitting in front of me. And here on the stage with me is the Commandant of Maxwell, Colonel Elmer Boling; and, Major General Ralph Royce, who is now in command of the Army Air Forces Southeast Training Center, which includes scores of flying fields. But General Royce's